

PSAT/NMSQT 2012

Frequent Questions and Answers

1. Why is the state only funding the PSAT/NMSQT for 10th grade students?

In 2012, Indiana will pay only for 10th grade students to take the PSAT/NMSQT because the amount in the state budget allows for the state to pay for only one grade level. The decision to fund 10th grade is linked to the extensive benefits and resources provided to students and schools beyond the test day experience.

Note that the majority of students that take the PSAT/NMSQT nationally are in grade 10 or younger (55% of PSAT/NMSQT in 2011). Other states are also supporting and encouraging the taking of the PSAT/NMSQT in Grade 10 for the following reasons:

- a. Students and their parents receive an earlier and better gauge of their post-secondary preparation;
- b. Students have time to adjust junior and senior high school schedules based on individual student data;
- c. Schools may use **AP Potential™** to identify students who may benefit from classes that help prepare students for and participate in Advanced Placement. College Board research shows strong correlations between students' PSAT/NMSQT scores and AP Exam results. PSAT/NMSQT scores can help to identify additional students who may be ready for the rigor of AP and pre-AP coursework;
- d. Students and parents have access to a variety of college, career and SAT preparation tools that have benefit throughout high school; and
- e. The **Summary of Answers and Skills (SOAS)** report allows schools to take a closer, detailed look at students' academic skills by providing a snapshot of student performance on each PSAT/NMSQT test question. Presented online, the report may be downloaded and easily shared with administrators and faculty at your school beginning in January (following the October PSAT/NMSQT administration).
- f. The impact of early PSAT practice on SAT scores is significant.

2. Are ALL 10th grade students supposed to take the PSAT/NMSQT?

That is the state goal. Funding is available for every 10th grade student in an accredited high school in Indiana to take the PSAT/NMSQT. The tools and reports provided after taking the PSAT/NMSQT are more valuable when all students are tested. The use of these tools and reports is a way to bring more students into the college and career planning process.

3. Isn't the PSAT just for those going to college? I'm not going to give it to my "non-college bound" students.

The PSAT is not just for college-bound students. It also provides extensive (free) information to students about their career choices and provides teachers with information on ways to help the student do better in English and math classes. Deciding who, in 10th grade, is college-bound and who is not – is really not something that schools want to do without parent and student input.

4. Aren't PSAT scores correlated just to 11th graders?

No. The student score report for grade 10 and younger students will show how they compare to other grade 10 students in Indiana and across the country.

Following is a link that maps scores for both grades 10 and 11 and provides help in understanding PSAT scores:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/understanding-psat-nmsqt-scores.pdf>

5. What advantages does the PSAT/NMSQT provide to students?

- **Preparation for the SAT®.** The PSAT/NMSQT measures the same skills and has the same format, directions and question types. On average, students who take the PSAT/NMSQT earn higher scores on the SAT than those who do not.
- **Plan for College and Careers.** The PSAT/NMSQT encourages students to start thinking about college and introduces them to the skills they need to succeed. In addition, each student who takes the PSAT/NMSQT receives FREE access to My College QuickStart™, a personalized online college-planning guide driven by individual test results, and MyRoad™, an online tool designed to assist with college major and career exploration.
- **Receive Information from Colleges.** The **Student Search Service®** can provide each test taker with FREE information about admissions and financial aid from colleges, universities, and scholarship programs.
- **Improve their Skills.** Each student's Score Report will provide personalized feedback on test performance, ability to see questions answered incorrectly and suggestions to improve academic skills where assistance is still necessary.

See webinar on Tools of the PSAT: http://media.doe.in.gov/curriculum/PSAT_Students.html

6. What advantages does administration of the PSAT/NMSQT provide to educators?

- **Build a College-Going Culture.** Taking the PSAT/NMSQT gives students the opportunity to start thinking about college and career options. There are college and career planning tools available for all test takers (see above).
- **Increase Access to AP® Courses.** The AP Potential™ tool allows schools to identify additional students who may be ready for AP courses that may not have otherwise been determined.
- **Identify Strengths and Weaknesses.** The **Summary of Answers and Skills** report provides aggregate data by grade level
- **Collect and Utilize Valuable Data.** Reports providing information about participation and performance (www.collegeboard.com/reports).
- **Prepares Students for the SAT, including the SAT essay.** Schools offering the PSAT/NMSQT are provided access to ScoreWrite™: A Guide to Preparing for the SAT Essay. This guide provides everything necessary to administer a practice SAT essay session. It also trains teachers to score the essays using the SAT Scoring Guide.

7. Should 11th graders still be encouraged to take the PSAT/NMSQT? Do 11th grade students have to pay for it themselves?

Yes to both questions. We definitely want to encourage as many 11th grade students as possible to take the PSAT in 11th grade since that is the only grade they can qualify for the National Merit Scholarships. It also provides extra preparation for the SAT® and entrance to scholarship competitions. The cost for the PSAT/NMSQT for students in 11th grade is \$14. However, fee waivers are possible for students on free/reduced lunch. The priority date to request fee waivers is June 15, 2012.

(<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/waivers/guidelines/psat>)

8. How are PSAT/NMSQT test materials ordered?

PSAT/NMSQT test materials are ordered through the College Board at www.collegeboard.com/school. Click on the "Sign in to the PSAT/NMSQT Ordering Site" link. You will need the user name and password from last year. If you are a first-time user, you will need the access code provided on the registration announcement that was sent to your school.

Here are more detailed instructions:

1. Go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/school> and click on the "Sign In to the PSAT/NMSQT Ordering Site" link.
2. Sign in with the same user name and password you used to place your order last year. If you do not remember your user name and/or password, use the "Forgot your user name?" or "Forgot your password?" links. Each school will receive a registration announcement containing their PSAT/NMSQT Ordering Site access code via postal mail within the next few weeks; new users should wait until they receive their access codes prior to ordering materials.
3. Once you're logged into the PSAT/NMSQT Ordering Site you can:
 - Order test books and copies of the Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT
 - Request 10th grade fee waivers.
 - Order Optional Reports and Services, including Files of Student Data in ASCII or Excel-ready formats
 - Designate others in your school or district to receive PSAT/NMSQT-related emails by updating your schools "Test Coordinator Information" section

9. Is there a test return fee if too many tests are ordered?

Under the agreement between Indiana and College Board, *there is no* unused test fee for 10th grade student test booklets. Unused test booklets for students in 11th grade will be charged a fee of \$2.00/per test book for those unused books that exceeds 20% of the total order. There is an August 29 deadline date to reduce test orders, should too many tests be ordered initially. Orders will be indicated by grade level.

10. Important 2012 PSAT/NMSQT Dates:

June 15: Priority date to order test materials to ensure timely delivery of Student Guides and availability of fee waivers. Please note that the availability of fee waivers may be limited after this date. <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/waivers/guidelines/psat>

August 29: Deadline for receipt of completed *SSD Eligibility Forms* for students whose documentation must be reviewed by the College Board

August 31: Last date for U.S. schools to reduce test orders

September 9: Deadline for receipt of completed *SSD Eligibility Forms* for students whose documentation does not need review by the College Board and for receipt of SSD Order Roster to order nonstandard test formats for 2009 PSAT/NMSQT.

September 28: Last date for U.S. schools to increase test orders

October 17: Wednesday test date

October 31: Alternate school-day test for schools on a balanced calendar

11. Can students from Home Schools take the PSAT? Who pays if they do?

Home schooled students need to be able to take the PSAT in a public or non-public accredited school, as it can only be administered under College Board required conditions. Students who are enrolled in a home school but taking the PSAT at an accredited school must pay for the PSAT themselves (most often by providing a check for the cost of the PSAT, \$14, to the school). The home school students must use a special code on the PSAT test booklet to ensure that the accredited school does not receive an invoice for their tests. The state of Indiana only pays for students in grade 10 enrolled in public or accredited non-public schools in Indiana.

Source

The College Board (2012). *PSAT/NMSQT Information Sheet*. www.collegeboard.com